COMPUTERS / HILLEL SEGAL

'One Minute Manager' put to work

If you liked the book, "The One Minute Manager," but are having trouble implementing its ideas in your office, take a look at a new piece of software called Putting the One Minute Manager to Work.

Spinnaker Software Corp. of Cambridge, Mass., has come to the rescue with its IBM-PC compatible program. Available at $99.95, it's an excellent companion to the book and does just what it promises.

The concepts presented closely follow those in the book. Managers are guided in pinpointing areas for achievement, involving employees in creating action plans, following

Segal

up on a timely basis, coaching employees on their performance, and charting progress toward the organization's goals.

The program goes a step further, though, to present three possible ways of implementing these concepts. For managers who

might not want anyone to know they're using the program, it leads them through the process of entering the information and tracking the progress of each employee.

For more time-conscious managers, the program allows for data input by a staffer for review and analysis by the manager. This is not a recommended approach, even though it saves hours of valuable managerial time.

The best and recommended application is definitely the last: a system by which each staff member uses the disk on his or her own computer to enter data. The information is then reviewed and progress charted in a team effort by employee and manager.

Not only does this last method save the maximum amount of managerial time, but it also makes the employee an active participant in the goal-setting process. In keep-

ing with the book's philosophy, it permits the manager to "coach" workers rather than making their decisions.

Be forewarned, however, that it's not for everyone. Some points to consider:

✓ You must agree with the basic philosophy on goal-setting, praising and reprimands. This program is very consistent with the book, and in order to gain the most benefit from it, you must be willing to make a commitment to it. You don't, however, need to practice the one tenet of the original philosophy that many managers instinctively rebel against: that goal-setting, praising and reprimands must be limited to only one minute each. That's impossible!

✓ Putting the One Minute Manager to Work ties your overall management program to your computer. It is, however, no more confining than using the computer for accounting, word processing or spreadsheet analysis.

✓ The program is difficult for beginners to learn. Although the

manual consists of just 20-odd pages, it is complicated and can take several hours for employees who are not familiar with computers.

To simplify the learning process, I found a very handy second program to use with "One Minute Manager." Available from Personics Corp. of Concord, Mass., Smart Notes enables you to put different colored messages on the screen directing staffers on how to fill out the various forms. At $79.95, Smart Notes can save hours of learning time and frustration.

The bottom line: I found Putting the One Minute Manager to Work — and especially the team approach — to be excellent. It was not as easy to install the program on my computer as I had hoped, however.

Hillel Segal is an independent computer consultant and author of the monthly Executive Computing Newsletter, published by the Association of Computer Users, P.O. Box 9003, Boulder 80301.